

VZCZCXRO1751
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHAK #0023/01 0081054
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 081054Z JAN 07
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0495
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKDAI/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA// PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/425ABS IZMIR TU//CC// PRIORITY
RHMFISS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU PRIORITY
RUEPGAB/MNF-I C2X BAGHDAD IZ PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000023

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/08/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [US](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: ERDOGAN IMPATIENT FOR U.S. ACTION AGAINST
PKK

REF: ANKARA 0011

Classified By: CDA Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Turkish leaders have in recent days publicly lashed out against the slow pace of U.S. efforts to counter the PKK. Remarks by PM Erdogan and FM Gul openly critical of the level of USG and GOI cooperation to date in fighting the PKK have been touted by local commentators as presaging a Turkish cross-border attack in northern Iraq early this spring. Coming as rumors abound that the PKK will rescind its ceasefire and Turkey enters a hot election year, it is increasingly evident that the GOT is setting the stage to take action itself against the PKK. END SUMMARY

¶2. (C) Flying with press January 3 en route to Lebanon for a one-day visit, PM Erdogan fielded questions on the GOT's fight against the PKK. Erdogan was critical of USG efforts to date, saying "The U.S. appointed a special envoy but no positive development has been scored. We were supposed to take joint steps with the U.S. and Iraq on the terrorist organization but that did not takeplace either. We expected a serious step from the U.S. but there has been no such step...If we are strategic partners then we should be struggling against the terrorist organization together...We support the Maliki Government but there is a power vacuum." Turkey's special envoy to counter the PKK, retired General Edip Baser, was also characterized in the press as being "uneasy about the degree of seriousness with which the U.S. takes the fight against the PKK." Baser made public the frustration he has shared with us privately over the lack of progress to date in that fight, stating in "Hurriyet", "I have a timetable. Unless our requests are met, there will be nothing but for me to resign and this won't take long (to make such a decision)."

¶3. (C) Gauging the firestorm these comments aroused in the Turkish media, Erdogan and others have sought to clarify their remarks, emphasizing that Turkey has not yet given up on the envoys' initiative. According to Erdogan, "We want to get concrete results rather than abstract results. Right now we're working on it and it is an ongoing project. But at some point, it will be evaluated. If it is really going on efficiently, we will of course support it. But if there is no success, there is no point in insisting." FM Gul

underscored Erdogan's remarks, saying "Expectations have not yet been met. The U.S. is aware that more cooperation is required with Turkey in the fight against terrorism." In television interviews over the weekend of January 5-6, Baser denied reports he was ready to resign but emphasized that Turkey could decide at any time to "execute any operation, including a cross-border, for its own security."

14. (C) Despite rumors around the new year of an impending attack by the PKK that would bring to an end its self-declared ceasefire, the holiday period here ended without event. Recent statements by both Kongra-Gel leadership and Abdullah Ocalan point toward continued adherence to the ceasefire into the spring. However, PM Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) government are feeling rising pressure from an increasingly nationalist opposition as presidential and parliamentary election campaigns get underway (reftel). Judging from Erdogan's and Gul's remarks, it seems clear the AKP believes it needs to toughen its talk and show results in the fight against the PKK -- the number one domestic political issue in Turkey. Erdogan's and Gul's tough talk came after a December 28 National Security Council (MGK) meeting and may be the result of Turkish General Staff (TGS) pressure on the government to get out front on the issue. The recent series of statements is likely a calculated effort to lay the groundwork for whatever action the AKP government deems necessary. And the timeline is short -- the March 21 Nevruz holiday is the traditional marker for the onset of hostilities as the snows begin to melt.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at

ANKARA 00000023 002 OF 002

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

MCELDOWNEY